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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3802
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September 17, 2004

Kelly Parkhill
Director for Industry Support and Analysis
Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Parkhill:

In response to the August 25th request for comments on the Steel Import Monitoring and Analysis System, I want to urge that the Secretary act as expeditiously as possible to establish an expanded and enhanced program.

The current program has proven an important tool for policymakers and market participants in assessing the state of the market and reacting quickly to material changes. Given the major developments we have seen, and continue to see, in this industry worldwide, access to the most timely and accurate information regarding imports is essential. More information is a good thing for everyone and helps to make markets more efficient and responsive.

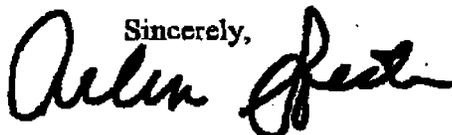
The Administration should be commended for setting up the current system, which has served to provide critical information, while in no way limiting or encumbering imports. With the current program set to expire next March, time is of the essence in getting a new initiative up and running. In addition, and as the Administration has already proposed, expanding the monitoring system to other basic steel products will make it far more useful and comprehensive. Furthermore, the program is fully WTO-consistent and is similar to one that has been in place in Canada for years.

The men and women of Pennsylvania, and throughout this industry, are doing their part to rebuild this vital sector of our economy. The government must do its part by ensuring that policymakers and industry participants have access to the best information possible – something that will allow us to respond to new challenges and ensure that the progress we are seeing is not derailed.

I urge you to adopt a permanent import monitoring program that will apply to an expanded set of steel products, and to get it up and running at the earliest possible date. Given that the existing program is already operational, the improvements and expansion that have been proposed should not require a time-consuming regulatory process.

Please keep me apprised of the time frame for establishing a new monitoring system.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter

cc: Donald L. Evans, Secretary of Commerce